

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 0486

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SF
SUBJECT: BUTHELEZI, LABOR PARTY LEADERS EJECTED FROM
SOBUKWE FUNERAL

1. SUMMARY: AT FUNERAL OF FORMER PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS (PAC) LEADER ROBERT SOBUKWE AT GRAAF REINET TODAY, MARCH 11, KWAZULU CHIEF MINISTER GATSHA BUTHELEZI WAS DRIVEN FROM VIP PLATFORM BY HOSTILE YOUNG BLACKS WHO REVILED HIM AS A "TRAITOR" AND A "STOOGE." COLORED LABOR PARTY LEADERS AND TRANSKEI "AMBASSADOR" ALSO LEFT AT "REQUEST" OF MILITANTS. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE REARRANGED AT LAST MINUTE BY YOUNG MILITANTS WHO ANGRILY REJECTED PROPOSAL OF THEIR ELDERS THAT WHITE LIBERALS BENJAMIN POGRUND (RAND DAILY MAIL) AND HELEN SUZMAN (PFP) AS WELL AS BUTHELEZI BE FEATURED SPEAKERS. INCIDENT HAS DEALT BLOW TO BUTHELEZI'S PRESTIGE AND EFFORTS OF ULUNDI ALLIANCE TO ACT AS CHAMPION OF BLACK UNITY. IT HAS ALSO ILLUSTRATED GRAPHICALLY THE GENERATION GAP BETWEEN MILITANT YOUNG BLACKS AND THEIR ELDERS AND INCREASING CONFIDENTIAL

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HOSTILITY OF THE FORMER TOWARD "WHITE LIBERALS".
END SUMMARY.

2. FUNERAL OF BANNED PAN-AFRICAN CONGRESS (PAC) LEADER ROBERT SOBUKWE TOOK PLACE MARCH 11 IN KAROO TOWN OF GRAAF REINET. AT ITS INCEPTION, FUNERAL THREATENED TO DEGENERATE INTO RIOT AS MILITANT YOUNG BLACKS, WHO THE

NIGHT BEFORE HAD SEIZED CONTROL OF FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FROM THEIR ELDERS AND REARRANGED ENTIRE PROGRAM, MOUNTED STRENuous OBJECTION TO PRESENCE ON THE VIP PLATFORM OF CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI, CHIEF MINISTER OF KWAZULU AND LEADER OF ZULU CULTURAL/POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, INKATHA.

3. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS WERE MADE INITIALLY BY ANGLICAN SUFFRAGAN BISHOP OF CAPE TOWN, PATRICK MATOLENGWE, AND SOBUKWE'S BROTHER, REV. E.A. SOBUKWE (PRESUMABLY WITH APPROVAL OF MRS. SOBUKWE) AND INCLUDED AS MAIN SPEAKERS BENJAMIN POGRUND, EDITOR OF RAND DAILY MAIL AND LONG-TIME FAMILY FRIEND, PROG-REF M.P. HELEN SUZMAN, ANGLICAN BISHOP OF LESOTHO DESMOND TUTU AND BUTHELEZI WHO WAS CLASSMATE OF SOBUKWE AT FORT HARE UNIVERSITY.

4. MATOLENGWE TOLD POL/ECONOFF, WHO ATTENDED FUNERAL ALONG WITH AMBASSADOR, THAT EVENING OF MARCH 10, GROUP OF YOUNG MILITANTS TOOK CONTROL OF FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND DECREED NEW SET OF SPEAKERS, WITH ONLY DESMOND TUTU INCLUDED FROM THE ORIGINAL GROUP. UPON ARRIVAL MORNING OF MARCH 11, SUZMAN, POGRUND AND BUTHELEZI WERE INFORMED THAT THEY WERE NO LONGER WANTED AS SPEAKERS. THIS FACT NOTWITHSTANDING, BUTHELEZI APPEARED AT SHOWGROUNDS WHERE MAIN CEREMONY WAS HELD AND TOOK HIS PLACE ON PLATFORM RESERVED FOR VIP GUESTS. IN BRIEF CHAT AS WE WERE ENTERING THE GROUNDS, BUTHELEZI TOOK NOTE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT THAT SOME ELEMENTS IN CROWD WERE CHANTING SONGS AND SLOGANS HOSTILE TO HIM BUT TOLD ME HE WAS DETERMINED TO REMAIN.

5. AS BUTHELEZI TOOK HIS PLACE ON PODIUM, HOSTILE CROWD OF YOUNG BLACKS GATHERED AROUND DEMANDING THAT HE LEAVE. DESPITE REPEATED AND URGENT ENTREATIES BY SENIOR FUNERAL ORGANIZERS THAT YOUNGSTERS DESIST AND THAT THEY NOT TURN SOBUKWE FUNERAL INTO A POLITICAL BATTLEGROUND, MILITANTS BECAME INCREASINGLY HOSTILE. FOR SOME 15-20 MINUTES, BUTHELEZI RESISTED PLEAS BY MINISTERS AND OTHERS THAT HE LEAVE IN ORDER TO AVOID VIOLENCE. AT ABOUT THIS TIME, SURGING CROWD APPEARED TO BE ON VERGE OF ATTACKING BUTHELEZI PHYSICALLY AND HE FINALLY MOVED TO LEAVE. AS HE DID SO, CROWD OF HOSTILE YOUNG BLACKS STREAMED AFTER HIM, SHOUTING "TRAITOR," "SELL-OUT" AND OTHER EPITHETS AND ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS JOSTLING HIM. AT THIS POINT, SEVERAL SHOTS WERE HEARD WHICH JOURNALISTS REPORTED WERE FIRED INTO THE AIR BY BUTHELEZI'S BODYGUARD IN ORDER TO WARD OFF HIS PURSUERS. WITH A RAPIDLY DETERIORATING SECURITY SITUATION, AND AT RSO'S URGING, MY WIFE AND I LEFT THE GROUNDS AT THAT POINT.

6. AS CONGEN, EMBOFF RETURNED TO SITE THEY CAME
ACROSS BUTHELEZI, UNINJURED BUT HIGHLY AGITATED,
HOLDING IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE ON ROADSIDE OUTSIDE

THE SHOWGROUNDS, EXPOSTULATING TO REPORTERS THAT
YOUNG BLACKS WHO OBJECTED TO HIS PRESENCE ACCUSED
HIM OF WORKING WITHIN APARTHEID SYSTEM WHILE THEY
THEMSELVES LIVED IN SEGREGATED TOWNSHIPS AND WERE
PRODUCTS OF BANTU EDUCATION. ROUNDING ON ONE
PERSISTENT QUESTIONER, BUTHELEZI ASKED HEATEDLY,
IF RHETORICALLY, "ARE THOSE WHITE LIBERALS ON THE STAND
BETTER THAN I AM THAT THEY ARE PERMITTED TO REMAIN WHILE
I AM FORCED TO LEAVE?"

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7. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, UPON ENTERING SHOWGROUNDS,
EMBOFFS MET COLORED LABOR PARTY LEADER SONNY LEON
AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER ALLAN HENDRICKSE LEAVING. THEY

CONFIRMED THAT FOLLOWING BUTHELEZI'S DEPARTURE THEY TOO HAD BEEN "ASKED" TO LEAVE WHICH THEY HAD DONE WITHOUT RESISTANCE ON THEIR PART AND WITHOUT HARASSMENT FROM YOUNG MILITANTS. WE UNDERSTAND FROM NEWS REPORTS THAT TRANSKEI "AMBASSADOR" PROF. NJISANE WAS ALSO EJECTED. THEREAFTER, FUNERAL SERVICE PROCEEDED AS SCHEDULED WITH MAJORITY OF SPEAKERS CONFINING THEMSELVES LARGELY TO EULOGISTIC REMARKS AND PERSONAL REMINISCENCES. IN NOTABLE CONTRAST, HOWEVER, WERE TWO SPEECHES WHICH WERE HIGHLY MILITANT AND WHICH VERGED ON DIRECT APPEAL FOR ARMED REVOLUTION. THESE WERE DELIVERED BY ISH MKABELA, REPORTEDLY A MEMBER OF THE SOWETO ACTION COMMITTEE AND AN UNSCHEDULED SPEAKER WHO OUR SOURCES DESCRIBE VAGUELY AS A "SWAPO" MEMBER." ONLY OTHER SPEAKER OF NOTE WAS G.M. PITJE, A JOHANNESBURG

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LAWYER, WHO LAUNCHED BITTER ATTACK ON "WHITE LIBERALS" GOING AS FAR BACK AS SMUTS AND JAN HOFMEYER.

8. ONCE "UNWANTED" GUESTS HAD DEPARTED, CROWD SETTLED DOWN AND THERE WERE NO RPT NO INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT OF THE NUMEROUS WHITES WHO WERE PRESENT. A 14-YEAR OLD WAS REPORTEDLY WOUNDED DURING FIRING OF SHOTS BY BUTHELEZI'S BODYGUARD, ONE WHITE REPORTER WAS INJURED BY THROWN ROCK, SEVERAL REPS OF AFRIKAANS PRESS WERE REPORTEDLY EJECTED, AND THREE BLACKS WERE SLIGHTLY INJURED DURING CROWD STAMPEDE BUT NONE SERIOUSLY. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, OF INTENSE HOSTILITY OF YOUNG MILITANTS TOWARD BUTHELEZI AND FACT THAT HE EMERGED PHYSICALLY UNSCATHED WAS DUE MORE TO CHANCE THAN ANY OTHER FACTOR.

9. WHILE EMERGING PHYSICALLY UNSCATHED, BUTHELEZI SUFFERED ACUTE PERSONAL HUMILIATION WHICH IS BOUND TO HAVE SOME IMPACT ON HIS POLITICAL STANDING. HE IS DUE TO DELIVER PUBLIC ADDRESS IN COLORED TOWNSHIP IN CAPE TOWN MARCH 13 (CAPE TOWN 292) FOLLOWING MEETING OF THE PARTNERS IN THE ULUNDI ALLIANCE. WE WILL WANT TO ASSESS HIS PERFORMANCE THERE AS WELL AS TALK TO SOURCES HERE AND IN NATAL AND TRANSVAAL BEFORE PROVIDING MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS OF POSSIBLE EFFECT OF THIS INCIDENT ON BUTHELEZI'S STANDING AND ITS IMPACT ON EFFORTS OF THE ULUNDI ALLIANCE TO PRESENT ITSELF AS MAJOR INSTRUMENT FOR FORGING BLACK UNITY.

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